



A helping hand from the Laborers Union

Terry Healy, Northwest regional manager and a vice president of the Laborers International Union, presents a check for \$5,000 to John Riha (wearing shorts). John is the brother of Laborers Local 296 member Randy Riha, who died of a heart attack July 20, 2011, while working at Intel Fab Z in Hillsboro. He was 54. The money is from the international union's Charitable Foundation Fund. The fund was established in 2008 to help the families of Laborers killed on the job. It was the first time since the fund was established that a Local 296 family member has received a check. At the time of his death, Randy was taking care of a younger brother who has a mental disorder. "He had a big heart," John Riha said. Randy Riha joined the Laborers Union in 1978 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He became a member of Local 296 after moving to Portland in 1986. The check presentation was made at a Local 296 union meeting July 17. Also attending the meeting were David Hayes (left), assistant regional manager of the Laborers, and Bob Abbott (right), an international representative. Local 296 Business Manager Ken Morgan is standing to the right of John Riha. "I can't believe it. This is just awesome," John Riha said. "Everyone has been great. It affected a lot of guys." Healy said that when a worker is killed on the job, it is very emotional for everyone. "Families are going through some very tough times at that point. We're proud that our union is able to do this for the families," he said.

Oregon AFL-CIO confab in Bend Sept. 27-29

BEND — Union leaders and activists, mark your calendars for Sept. 27-29 and the 53rd biennial Oregon AFL-CIO Convention. The convention will be held at The Riverhouse Hotel and Convention Center: 3075 N Business 97, Bend.

Registration opens Friday, Sept. 27.

That evening a Welcome Party will be held. Convention business gets under way Saturday morning, Sept. 28.

The popular Union Label Show is scheduled Saturday evening.

For more information, call the Oregon AFL-CIO at 503-224-3169, or from Salem call 503-585-6320.

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...Strike over at Daimler trucks

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month for full-family coverage.

Unchanged from the previous contract, the new contract provides for 14 paid holidays a year (including an annual plant shutdown between Christmas and New Year's) plus three to six weeks of paid vacation annually.

The new contract ends the company's obligation to provide post-65 retiree health insurance (insurance that supplements Medicare coverage). The 111 most senior Machinists members will be affected by that; their less-senior co-workers didn't have that benefit, under the previous contract. The workers would still get the coverage if they retire before Jan. 1, 2014. To replace the company-provided coverage would cost \$38 to \$323 a month in the Portland area, according to a union estimate.

The union negotiating teams recommended that members vote to approve the company's modified offer.

"Even though we were in a position to hurt them, there weren't signs the

company was going to move in a direction that would be advantageous to members," Kear said.

The vote was close in the Machinists' case: 225 to 209.

No union members crossed the picket line to work during the 22-day strike, but Daimler began using striker replacements July 15 — brought in by Strom Engineering of Minnetonka, Minnesota, a company that specializes in providing labor during work stoppages. The week before the strike ended, union picket captains estimated 150 strikebreakers were crossing the picket line daily. If the use of replacement workers was intended to frighten strikers, Kear said it didn't have that effect. The replacement workers were withdrawn July 22 after union members ratified the contract.

After walking through the plant, Kear said it appeared that the replacement workers did nothing but make a mess. No trucks were completed, and members returning to their work stations found components that were built incorrectly, like brakes that had airing

put in backwards.

Striking unions had begun working with Portland Jobs With Justice to plan a mass strike support rally July 29. With the strike over, the rally was cancelled.

Bread-and-butter issues were front and center during the dispute, but it was clear in several union meetings that respect was also an underlying issue. At a joint meeting July 17 of the two striking unions, chief steward Dwain Panian said the union bargaining team made it clear to management that workers feel they haven't been listened to, haven't been thanked, and haven't been treated with respect. The company demonstrates its attitude in small-scale morale-busters, like foul-smelling employee bathrooms, taking away safety glass cleaner on the shop floor, and ending the practice of providing Gatorade on scorching summer days — in a plant without air conditioning. Now that union members are back on the job, the company will have a chance to improve morale — if it chooses to address those issues.

Bradken foundry:

No contract, a year after union vote

CHEHALIS, Wash. — Military and corporate contracts are the bread and butter of Australian-owned Bradken Engineered Products, but when it comes to signing a contract with its Chehalis, Washington, foundry workers, the company appears to be dragging its feet.

The Chehalis foundry makes metal products used in rail, transit, mining, industrial, military, energy and power generation industries. Workers there voted to join the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Aug. 10, 2012.

Ending arbitrary pay was a top priority when workers began meeting with management to bargain a first-time union contract in November. Then this spring the company disclosed its official pay scale. Workers compared it to their actual wages, and were shocked to see that wages varied up to \$10 an hour for the same job, and that new hires were sometimes paid more than the long-time workers who trained them.

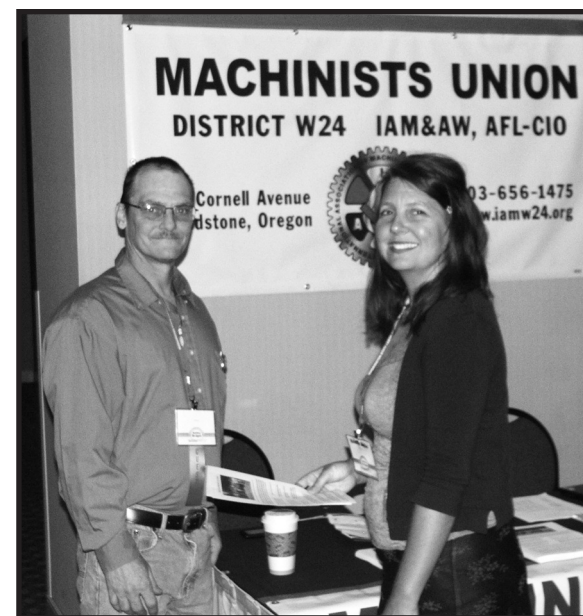
But bargaining has produced no contract thus far in nine months of meetings. Machinists District Lodge W24 Rep Joe Kear said talks move slowly even on minor things. The company has agreed to "just cause" discipline and a grievance process. But its wage proposal is to keep the status quo, a set of practices workers can't make sense of.

And the company doesn't act like it's in a hurry; Kear said management has generally been available to meet only twice a month, and has canceled five meetings since November.

The foot-dragging may have had the effect of unifying workers around the union banner, however. The August union vote was 48 to 44. But in May, 81 of about 100 workers signed a petition asking management to speed things up and sign a contract providing fair wages, dignity and respect.

Sammy Williams, 26-year-old Bradken worker who operates a sand reclamation machine, didn't think much of unions when organizers and co-workers came knocking on his door last year. But Williams says he decided to give the union a chance, and since then management has driven him firmly into the union camp. He learned that the company's wage policy was supposed to have started him at \$12 an hour, but he had started at \$10.15. He now serves on the union bargaining committee.

Since at least February, Bradken workers have been reaching out to the wider community for support, starting with a



To build labor support for their campaign for a first contract, Bradken workers attended the July 25-27 convention of the Washington State Labor Council. Pictured above is Darren Wright, a member of the union bargaining committee, at the Bradken information table, talking to Kristen Beifus of the Washington Fair Trade Coalition.

resolution of support by the Thurston-Lewis-Mason Central Labor Council.

On May 6, they received a letter of solidarity from the heads of two Australian unions — the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and the Australian Workers Union. Bradken is heavily unionized in its home country.

"Our two unions have met with the Australian CEO and MD of Bradken," they wrote. "At that meeting, we demanded that the company negotiate a fair contract with the IAM immediately."

The two sides were next scheduled to meet July 30, after this issue went to press.